

 <b>THE CITY OF NORFOLK</b> POLICE DEPARTMENT	<b>Operational General Order – 420: Preliminary Investigations</b>		
	Office of Preparation: Office of Support Services (mar)		
	<b>CALEA:</b> 4.1.5, 42.1.4, 42.2.1, 55.2.3		
LEGAL REVIEW DATE:	1-3-2020	PRESCRIBED DATE:	01.16.2020
City Attorney:	<i>[Signature]</i>	City Manager/Director of Public Safety:	<i>[Signature]</i>
APPROVED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:		<i>[Signature]</i>	

**Purpose:**

To provide procedural guidelines and establish responsibilities for conducting preliminary investigations.

**Policy:**

Norfolk Police Department policy requires that all crime scenes be investigated in a timely, thorough and professional manner using established procedures in this general order.

**Supersedes:**

1. G.O. OPR-420: Preliminary Investigations dated May 14, 2009
2. Any previously issued directive conflicting with this order

**Order Contents:**

- I. Officer-in-Charge
- II. Crime Scene Responsibility
- III. Conducting a Preliminary Investigation

I. Officer-in-Charge (CALEA 42.1.4, 42.2.1c)

- A. The first officer to arrive at a crime scene will be the Officer-in-Charge (OIC). The OIC is responsible for crime scene preservation, the preliminary investigation, and ensuring that first aid is made available to any injured persons. These responsibilities continue until the OIC is relieved by the officer assigned the message, an investigator, or a supervisor.
- B. Patrol officers will be assigned messages to conduct preliminary investigations except in those cases when it is advantageous to have an investigator respond.

II. Crime Scene Responsibility (CALEA 42.2.1c)

The crime scene is either where the crime occurred, or where any overt act relating to the crime took place. Officers are reminded that the crime scene can be a dynamic, rapidly changing situation and can extend to the perimeter of the area in which the suspect(s) may have traveled. The OIC at a crime scene will:

- A. Render first aid to the injured and assist Fire-Rescue personnel. (CALEA 4.1.5)
  - 1. Officers securing the crime scene will permit Fire-Rescue personnel to check any injured persons for signs of life using whatever equipment they deem necessary. The number of Fire-Rescue personnel allowed within the scene will be determined by the following criteria:
    - a. Fire-Rescue personnel will perform any lifesaving functions without interference if the injured person is exhibiting any signs of life.
    - b. In situations where death appears to be obvious (rigor mortis, postmortem lividity, etc.) the officer will permit one Fire-Rescue member to check the injured person for signs of life. Other Fire-Rescue personnel will wait outside the crime scene ready to provide assistance if needed.
  - 2. The officer securing the crime scene will ensure that rescue supplies used on the injured party such as syringes, dressings, etc. are left as part of the crime scene and are preserved. This will minimize the chance of inadvertently destroying or removing items of evidentiary value.
  - 3. The OIC will assist Fire-Rescue personnel in obtaining any available injured person information required to complete their reports.
- B. Secure the crime scene and immediate area to protect and preserve the evidence for processing. Police personnel not directly involved with the investigation will be prohibited from entering the crime scene. Personnel securing the crime scene will:
  - 1. Observe and note all conditions and events that may assist in the investigation. (CALEA 42.2.1a)
  - 2. Post officers at specific points to secure evidence.
  - 3. Use crime scene tape or line to identify prohibited areas.
    - a. Members of the news media may be allowed in the area of major fires, natural disasters, or other catastrophic events if their presence will not

jeopardize police operations. However, under no circumstances will media representatives be allowed in the area near and around a crime scene, unless the investigating officers are satisfied that the proximity of the media representatives will not impair or adversely affect the investigation or operation.

- b. Any person not specifically authorized who attempts to enter the established boundary will be notified that to do so may interfere with or obstruct the police in the performance of their duties.
  - c. Individuals who violate "Police Lines" may be charged with State Code 18.2-460, Obstructing Justice; State Code 18.2-414.2, Crossing Established Police Lines, Perimeters or Barricades, or both.
- C. Notify the telecommunicator of any hazardous condition at the scene, the type of assistance needed (e.g., Fire-Rescue members, additional officers or investigators) and provide information concerning any suspect(s) who have fled (e.g., description of suspects, vehicles involved, direction of travel, if the suspect was armed).

### III. Conducting a Preliminary Investigation

The OIC at the crime scene will request investigative assistance when appropriate. If an investigator is unable to respond, the OIC will conduct the preliminary investigation. The Incident Based Report (IBR) will be assigned to the appropriate investigative section for follow-up.

- A. Arresting officers will have investigative responsibility for the following felony offenses:
  - 1. Third offense petit larceny or concealment.
  - 2. Habitual offender.
  - 3. Possession or transportation of a firearm by a convicted felon.
  - 4. Third offense, assault and battery against a family or household member.
  - 5. Shooting or throwing objects at or from an occupied vehicle.
  - 6. Second offense, carrying concealed weapon.
  - 7. Assault on a police officer.
- B. Investigators are required to respond to serious criminal offenses including but not limited to:
  - 1. Homicide.
  - 2. Rape.
  - 3. Commercial robbery.
  - 4. Robbery to individuals.
  - 5. Hit and run fatality.
  - 6. Aggravated assault where death is probable.



7. All narcotics investigations that result in a felony arrest.
- C. A preliminary investigation will include, but is not limited to, the following steps:
1. Identifying, interviewing, and recording the names and addresses of any victim and witnesses. Separating individuals until an investigator arrives. (CALEA 42.2.1 b, d)
  2. Arresting the suspect(s) if still on the scene, and ensuring that arrested suspect(s) are separated and properly searched. (CALEA 42.2.1d)
    - a. Interviews or questioning should not be conducted by patrol officers in preliminary investigations where the suspect is to be turned over to an investigator. This is not meant to prevent patrol officers from receiving and recording voluntary statements or confessions.
    - b. If an arrest is made and investigators are unable to respond to the scene, the appropriate section or unit supervisor will be notified and will provide instructions to the OIC.
    - c. Interviews conducted by patrol officers involving misdemeanor violations or felonies for which they have investigative responsibility, will follow the guidelines set forth in G.O. OPR-425: Interviews.
  3. Ensuring that a crime scene search is conducted to include areas where the suspect may have been prior to the commission of the crime.
  4. Ensuring the collection, labeling, and vouchering of all evidence in misdemeanor cases with an arrest and felonies for which the patrol division has investigative responsibility. (CALEA 42.2.1c)
    - a. When a crime scene is to be processed and the Forensic Section cannot immediately respond, the complainant will be advised of the delay and that the Forensic Section will arrive as soon as possible but that appointments or exact arrival time cannot be given.
    - b. In cases where the officer is unsure as to whether or not the Forensic Section should be called, direction will be requested from the officer's supervisor.
  5. Canvassing of the crime scene neighborhood will be conducted for serious crimes such as those listed in Section III B. The OIC will ensure that:
    - a. All personnel involved in the canvass understand their responsibilities.
    - b. The canvass includes the immediate vicinity and the potential route of the suspect(s).
  6. Ensuring that the incident and investigation are fully and accurately reported by preparing an Incident Based Report.
  7. In accordance with procedures set forth in G.O. ADM-473: Crime Victims' Compensation, for victims and witnesses who require information related to victim compensation and related services available through the City of Norfolk, police officers will provide a copy of the attachment, Norfolk

Victim/Witness Assistance Program Information Sheet. This handout provides a brief description of the program and contains a list of phone numbers for those who either need assistance or wish to provide information regarding specific cases. (CALEA 55.2.3)

8. Transporting victims and witnesses to safe places or medical facilities according to established procedures.
- D. The following crimes will not be processed unless a supervisor or investigator directs otherwise:
1. Breaking and entering into a shed or detached garage.
  2. Larceny of a bicycle, or from an auto, or vending machine.
  3. Misdemeanor vandalism.
- E. A follow-up investigation on inactive offenses is permitted by patrol officers, under the direction of their supervisor, when both of the following conditions exist:
1. The offense appears to be one in a pattern.
  2. The area of the offense occurs within the district of the patrol officer's responsibilities.

#### Related Documents

1. G.O. ADM-130: News Media Policy
2. G.O. ADM-410: Property and Evidence
3. G.O. ADM-473: Crime Victims' Compensation
4. G.O. OPR-415: Incident Based Reporting (IBR)
5. G.O. OPR-425: Interviews
6. G.O. OPR-430: Case Report
7. G.O. OPR-452: Family Violence
8. G.O. OPR-720: Juveniles
9. Police Officer's Manual

#### Attachment

Norfolk Victim/Witness Assistance Program Information Sheet



## **Norfolk Victim/Witness Assistance Program**

### **Information Sheet**

The Norfolk Police Department works in partnership with local agencies to increase awareness of services available to victims and witnesses, thereby providing equal access to law enforcement, government agencies, and community resources. These partnerships ensure that the rights of the victim and witness are protected, that they are provided immediate and direct support, and that all victims and witnesses are treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity.

Listed below are resources that provide assistance and/or support to victims and witnesses of crime:

**Norfolk Police Detective Division: 757-664-7015**

Personnel investigate crimes and interview persons related to criminal acts, including victims, witnesses, and suspects.

**Norfolk Commonwealth's Attorney's Office: 757-664-4444**

This office is responsible for the prosecution of all felony charges and some misdemeanor charges resulting from violations of the Criminal Code of Virginia occurring in the City of Norfolk.

**Norfolk Commonwealth's Attorney's Victim/Witness Program: 757-664-4850**

This program advocates for individuals who have been victimized by crime in the City of Norfolk. The program provides assistance and services through a network of community organizations, and helps to ensure the comprehensive representation of crime victims and witnesses in criminal cases. Advocates serve as liaisons between prosecutors, victims, and witnesses as developments occur.

**Victim/Witness Director: 757-664-4822**

Director of the Norfolk Commonwealth's Attorney's Victim/Witness Program

**YWCA Victim Centered Services**

Office Location: 500 Plume Street, Norfolk, VA

1. 24-hour Crisis Hotline (Coordinated Crisis Response): 757-251-0144
2. Victim Counseling/Housing/Shelter: 757-625-4248 (M-F, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.)

Survivors of sexual violence are provided with support. All services are free and confidential.

---

**CHKD (Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters) Child Abuse Program: 757-668-6100**

Services are provided for victims 17 years of age or younger.

**Website:** <http://www.chkd.org/Our-Services/Specialty-Care-and-Programs/Child-Abuse-Program/>

This program identifies and provides services for child victims of abuse and neglect in a safe, culturally competent, supportive environment while reducing secondary trauma. Appointments are referral based and are made by detectives, PCPs (primary care physicians), CPS (Child Protective Services) workers or other child safety advocates.

**Department of Human Services Main Number: 757-664-6000**

This City of Norfolk department offers various forms of assistance including: providing services for at-risk youth and their families; providing child protective services; facilitating prevention services; and addressing incidents of suspected abuse or neglect.

**Police/Fire-Rescue**

Emergency – 911; Non-Emergency – 757-441-5610